

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON, D.C.
20508**

USTR PRESS RELEASES ARE AVAILABLE ON THE USTR HOME PAGE AT WWW.USTR.GOV.
THEY ARE ALSO AVAILABLE THROUGH THE USTR FAX RETRIEVAL SYSTEM AT 202-395-4809.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 1999**

99 - 24
CONTACT: JAY ZIEGLER
HELAIN KLASKY
AMY STILWELL
(202) 395-3230

**USTR REACHES AGREEMENT WITH TAIWAN
ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE APEC TELECOM MRA**

The American Institute in Taipei, the Taipei Economic and Cultural Institute, and United States Trade Representative concluded an agreement today to implement Phase I of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Telecommunications Accord. (Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Conformity Assessment of Telecommunications Equipment) Chinese- Taipei (Taiwan) became the first APEC economy to implement a telecom Mutual Recognition Arrangement with the United States. This agreement will permit U.S. authorities to accredit labs in the United States to test telecommunications equipment to Taiwan's requirements.

"This will greatly simplify procedures U.S. firms undertake when exporting American telecommunications and information technology products to Taiwan. It will permit U.S. exporters to lower their costs and get their products to market faster in Taiwan. I expect this agreement to further stimulate the growth of our exports of information technology products to Taiwan, which now exceed one billion dollars annually," stated United States Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky.

Taiwan will gain similar rights for its exports to the United States.

Background

This first step in implementation of the APEC Telecom MRA permits accreditation of laboratories and exchange of test data for mandatory tests for equipment designed to be attached to the telecommunications network (e.g. phone handsets, modems, switches, Internet routers) and for information technology equipment such as computers, which is subject to electro-magnetic compatibility (EMC) requirements. EMC requirements are intended to prevent information technology equipment from causing harmful interference with other equipment.

Under the provisions of the agreement, the National Institute of Standards will be able to accredit U.S. private-sector labs to test to Taiwan requirements, and Taiwan authorities will be able to do likewise for U.S. telecommunications requirements.